

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MASS, BE

SUBJECT: F-104 REPLACEMENT

REF: BRUSSELS 2644 AND 2787

1. IN RESPONSE TO EMBASSY'S REQUESTS IN PARA 3 OF REFTTEL, YOU MAY ASSURE BELGIANS THAT NO SPECIAL DEAL HAS BEEN STRUCK WITH THE DUTCH EITHER DURING VREDELING'S MARCH 10 WASHINGTON VISIT OR AT ANY OTHER TIME. MEMCON OF VISIT WILL BE POUCHED SEPARATELY BUT IN INTERESTS OF TIME, PERTINENT HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW.

2. DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING CURRIE NOTED F-16 BRINGS TOGETHER A NUMBER OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS BEST ENGINE WITH ECONOMY INHERENT IN FAN YET, COMPOSITE MATERIALS, PROVEN AERODYNAMIC INNOVATIONS AND
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ADVANCED LOOK-DOWN RADAR. PLANE IS MULTIPURPOSE, HAVING

STRONG GROUND SUPPORT AS WELL AS AIR SUPERIORITY CHARACTERISTICS. U.S. STATIONING OF F-16 IN EUROPE AND COPRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT WOULD BE A THRUST TOWARD STANDARDIZATION. DIFFUSION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IS INHERENT IN PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP AND TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT LIFE OF THE PROGRAM. SOVIETS ARE APPARENTLY DEVELOPING NEW AIR SUPERIORITY FIGHTER AND COULD HAVE 350 DEVELOPED IN 1985 TIME FRAME. SOVIETS HAVE HAD TRADITION OF SUCCESS IN HIGH THRUST-TO-WEIGHT RATIOS AND FIGHTER DESIGN BUREAUS CONTINUE TO OPERATE. F-16 WAS COMPARED TO OTHER FIGHTERS, INCLUDING SOVIET, AND ITS BETTER TURN RATE AT COMBAT SPEEDS CONVINCES U.S. THAT F-16 WOULD DOMINATE THE BATTLE.

3. VREDELING WAS GIVEN NEGATIVE RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION WHETHER F-5 COULD DISCHARGE AIR SUPERIORITY ROLE. VERSATILITY OF F-16 TO HANDLE BOTH AIR SUPERIORITY AND GROUND SUPPORT WAS STRESSED. DOD OFFICIALS ALSO STRESSED FACT THAT TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES OF F-16 SHOULD HELP ORGANIZATION OF INTEGRATED EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY. BY 1985 AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY IN EUROPE WOULD BE PRODUCING SUCH AIRCRAFT AS VIGGEN, MIRAGE, MRCA, JAGUAR AND ALPHA JET. PRODUCTION OF F-16 WOULD CONSTITUTE ONLY 15 PERCENT OF EUROPEAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION. THIRD-COUNTRY PURCHASE OF F-16 WOULD ALSO SUSTAIN A VIABLE AND ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL BASE FOR THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY IN EUROPE.

4. ON THE MATTER OF COMPETITIVENESS, RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONVEY OUR CONFIDENCE THAT SINCE THE PRIME CONTRACTOR'S "MAKE OR BUY" PLANS WERE STRUCTURED TO MEET OR EXCEED THE 10/40/15 PERCENT OFFSET COMMITMENT, WE DO NOT FORESEE INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES TO ACHIEVING THE USG OFFSET COMMITMENT TO CONSORTIUM AND HENCE BELGIUM. BELGIUM IS EARMARKED TO GET ABOUT ALL OF THE ENGINE PRODUCTION IN EUROPE AND WILL HAVE ITS OWN AIRCRAFT FINAL ASSEMBLY LINE. YOU CAN EMPHASIZE THAT THE USG UNDERTAKES TO WORK WITH THE CONTRACTORS AND THE FOUR COUNTRIES THROUGH THE STEERING COMMITTEE TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THE OFFSET COMMITMENTS IF A SERIOUS PROBLEM DOES DEVELOP WITHIN THE PROGRAM CONCERNING THE LEVEL OF OFFSET ACCOMP-

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LISHMENT. ONE ALTERNATIVE COULD BE OFFSET OPPORTUNITIES ON OTHER DOD PRIME CONTRACTS. IN ANY EVENT, WE ARE AGREED THAT THE FIRST PRIORITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OFFSET ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE IN THE EUROPEAN AIRSPACE INDUSTRY. THE POINT TO EMPHASIZE STRONGLY, HOWEVER, IS FIRST SENTENCE ABOVE.

5. EMBASSY MAY ALSO NOTE THAT SECDEF IN HIS MEETING WITH

FOUR DEF MINS HERE LAST SEPTEMBER 13 STRESSED USG RELIABILITY FROM PAST EXPERIENCE TO PERFORM AS A RESPONSIBLE PARTNER AND TO CARRY OUT ALL OF ITS COMMITMENTS.

6. ON EXCHANGE RATE COMPLEXITIES CONCERNING FLUCTUATIONS, WE AGREE WITH EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT IN PARA 2 REFTEL.

7. WITH REGARD TO PARA 5 OF YOUR 2787, DEFENSE FEELS FURTHER DISCUSSION OF OFFSET ASPECTS WOULD BE BEST HANDLED AFTER APRIL 3 MEETING OF MODS. CONSORTIUM COUNTRIES ARE FULLY KNOWLEDGEABLE REGARDING PRESENT USG OFFSET UNDERTAKINGS. KISSINGER

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